

Correspondence.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Sir,—Though my letter appeared in the 30th No. of *THE BUILDER*, it has not, I regret to say, elicited any thing further relative to the facade of the British Museum, either from yourself or any correspondent. So long as no attempt had been made to direct attention to the matter, there was room for hoping that that being done, the public—that part of it at least who affect to take any interest in art—would express some solicitude about a structure which, whatever it may prove as to architecture, will be the only one of its kind in the metropolis. We shall no more have the opportunity of erecting another British Museum, than another Tower of London, or a second St. Paul's. What is more, we are not likely to have another edifice of any kind which will afford so appropriate an occasion of putting forth Grecian architecture in all its energy and intensity.

A very great deal has been said of late about the encouragement now given to art, the more intelligent views entertained of it, and the general interest it now excites: Fudge! It must be a very strange kind of sympathy with art, which induces artists and the public to leave their national museum to take its chance, for better or worse, at the hands of Sir R. Smirke, without their giving themselves any concern about it. The public seem to have taken a Father Mathew's pledge to that effect, at least all the newspapers do, for with the solitary exception of the *Morning Herald*, not one of them, as far as I can perceive and learn, has touched upon the subject at all; on the contrary, the *Times* has, to my own knowledge, positively refused to do so, by declining either to insert or otherwise take notice of a letter on the subject, addressed to it, although it could find space the very next day for sundry notes from correspondents, some of them on the most frivolous matters. Accordingly, it is easy enough to see how the wind sets in that quarter. For being silent, that paper may, however, have very strong, though secret reasons; and for aught I can tell, Sir R. Smirke himself may hold a share in the property of that journal, in which case its silence would be plainly accounted for.

If not from the *Times*, we shall get explanation in time as to the architecture of the Museum from the building itself. And then? why then, there will be a "double discovery;" the public will find out that the British Museum has been "damned" by Sir R. Smirke, and Sir Robert that his own professional character has been "damned" by the British Museum.

I remain, as before,
Yours faithfully,
INQUIRER.

MASONS' PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.

Sir,—On the perusal of your last number, I perceive you have arrested our attention on the subject of the "Masons' Provident Institution," with a view (as I perceive) to assist in furthering its objects.

I beg to apologize for the neglect in not communicating with you upon the subject earlier, ever considering that the "press" is an invaluable channel (if properly directed) through which objects of any nature can consummate their wishes, and feel assured that in future I shall render you every information connected with the Institution.

The matter being only in its infant state, I cannot give you any information, further than, having made personal calls upon several of the most influential employers, I feel proud to acknowledge the handsome manner in which the deputation has been invariably received, and the warmth of feeling expressed leaves no doubt of our most sanguine hopes being realized.

A public meeting will shortly be held upon the subject, of which due notice will be given; in the mean time we should appreciate to the fullest extent your exertions in behalf of such a benevolent institution.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,
J. T. WHITHEAD, Hon. Sec.
1, Johnson-street, Westminster,
September 18, 1843.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTURAL DRAFTSMEN.

Sir,—It was with great satisfaction that I, with many other members of the Association of Architectural Draftsmen, read the sensible letter of your correspondent "B.," inserted in your last number, but, to be honest, this satisfaction mainly arises from the proof that it affords of the growing interest the profession generally are taking in the society. Moreover, it is convincing testimony that its real objects only require to be well understood and more widely disseminated (which, thanks to your journal, is now rapidly taking place), to make hundreds rally round the standard that will eventually lead to an academy of our own.

The good feeling expressed by your correspon-

dent towards the society, and which is now heard on all sides, must be followed by something more than professions of friendly feeling;—we want men who will assist in carrying out the objects of the society, for by numbers alone can we ever hope to effect much;—we want men who can not only work for their own improvement, but those who can do it to the advancement of the profession generally, by bringing before the society such of the best examples of executed works that may be within their own immediate province to possess;—we want men who can assist, by their talent and perseverance, to get up an annual architectural exhibition, that may eventually lead to the public study of this, our much-neglected art.

Your correspondent may learn from this that it is the "way" we lack and not the "will" to carry out his suggestions, and which have for some time been mourned over. We anticipate better things shortly.

"B." takes for granted more than he should in supposing that ornamental draughtsmen as a body are excluded from the society. I have no such rule; on the contrary, I am of opinion that every one connected in any way with the study of architecture, whether as carvers, decorators, or the like, would be admissible after passing the usual ordeal; of course such men must be known to be as capable of producing works on paper as they are on stone or wood, though such a remark is unnecessary, for it may be inferred that none of the former class would feel sufficient interest in the society to become members, or if they did, scrupulous notions might be waived on such a rare occasion. With regard to sketching original designs on the nights of meeting, the members at present seem divided as to the results that might arise from it.

Your usual liberality in inserting all communications connected with the art, makes it but a mere ceremony to ask the favour of the insertion of this in your next number.

I have the pleasure of subscribing myself,
Your constant reader, &c.

MEMBER OF THE B.A.A.D.
September 11, 1843.

DETACHED COTTAGE.

Sir,—In No. 30 of *THE BUILDER* you gave a design for a Detached Cottage. As I perceive you are catering in that department for a class of individuals who are not overburdened with capital, and as the Elizabethan style causes, as it regards the plan of walls, roofs, &c., an additional expense in the carrying out, I should like some of the readers of your paper who have spare time to give one or two neat elevations, and the best method of laying out the apartments in a square building, as it gives the greatest quantity of room with the least quantity of walling; the money so saved might be laid out to advantage in exterior decoration at an after period if the party wished. For example, a house of two stories, 20 feet square, on plain walls 18 feet high, covers 400 superficial feet, and would take about 5 rods of brickwork; whereas, one 10 feet long and 20 feet deep, on plan, and the same height, would require 4 rods of walling, and only cover one-half the ground. The money so saved might at a future time, if the party thought fit, be laid out to advantage in decorating the exterior.

I am your obedient servant,
B. H.

P. S.—My time is so much occupied, or I would have sent you a rough sketch.

ON CLEANING MARBLE STATUES, &c.

Sir,—Never use soap or any other substance containing grease for cleaning marble statues, chimney-pieces, alabaster ornaments, &c., for this reason, that the soap will generally, if not always, discolour it with a yellow appearance. Use common rock soda, dissolved in cold water, and apply it to the statue, &c., and then wash it off with a sponge and cold water; let the figure dry by the air, and on no account use cloths. The marble so washed has, when dry, a most beautiful appearance. This will also take stains out of the marble.

For taking Grease, &c. out of Marble, Stone, &c.—Take 2 balls of unslacked lime, 3 lbs. of American potash, half a gallon of water; mix and boil them together for one hour, and then spread the sediment over the stained stone or marble.

Z.

CLASSIC NOT CHRISTIAN.

Sir,—In your useful journal, *THE BUILDER*, of the 16th inst., is "A Design for a Church in the Classic Style," so called by its designer. I hope the time is not far distant when such a title will be entirely laid aside, and the proper one substituted—*as*, A Design for the "House of Prayer." The words "classical style" imply the Greek style, when the Greeks were Pagans. The word "classical" is understood to "relate to antique authors," but it does not include the Hebrews or Christians in that interpretation, and therefore the

real meaning of the classical style would be Pagan style, and which is a most irreverent naming of matter (though not intended), when such is upon the highest and most important of all matters that man can take in hand. If the word style is to be connected with the subject of church design, then it should never be unconnected with the word Christian, and therefore Christian style; but there is no occasion for this, and nothing further than A Design for the House of Prayer, or for the Temple to the Living God; and from either of these titles it should be understood that the whole of the sculptured forms and architectural divisions and arrangements which make up the design of the house of prayer should be in accordance with the Word of God, and not with the words of the Pagan Greeks or Romans, as we see to our shame and disgrace in these days as well as in the days of the two last centuries. I could make many remarks upon the impropriety of making God's House out of Pagan materials, but at present I have not the time; but I will beg to direct S. B. J.'s attention to my works on Christian art and ecclesiastical design under the title of Illustrations and Descriptive Interpretation of Kilpeck Church, Herefordshire, and Early Points of England, in which I have given the true principles for designing the House of God.

It would have afforded me much pleasure to have made remarks upon S. B. J.'s design, but I have not the time for it. It will be seen that sufficient reasons are given in my work of Kilpeck Church for designing the House of Prayer religiously, and therefore there is no occasion for stating the matter over again at this time.

I am, Mr. Editor, truly yours,

GEO. R. LEWIS.

61, Upper Norton-street, Portland-place, London,
September 19, 1843.

P.S.—If I had the time, there are many points that I should be glad to say a few words upon which have appeared in *THE BUILDER* lately.

[We give insertion to our friend Mr. Lewis's letter, but must deprecate the introduction of polemics, even through the side door of a classic church design; and to avoid, if possible, the giving rise to a discussion on this head, we beg to be tolerated in saying a word or two ourselves. We conceive the great error to be expressed in the title of Mr. Lewis's letter, "Classic not Christian." Surely he will not take such sweeping ground as this. Why, we contend that all that is good and true, classic or what you like to call it, is Christian. As well might we object to stonewrought and dressed in the fashion of classic, or if you please Pagan, times, as to the form in which they shall be upreared; what, in the name of reason, is there of an un-Christian character in a column, or an assemblage of columns? While we do not dispute the as yet superior fitness of a Gothic pile for an English Christian Church, we must take care not to involve ourselves in the monstrous inconsistency of assenting to the dogma "Classic not Christian." There is a great deal to be said on this subject, but we are afraid it ought not to be introduced here, and as we have closed our own mouth against the utterance of it, so we hope the subject will not be unnecessarily intruded on us by others. —Ed.]

ON VARNISHING DRAWINGS.

Sir,—A Correspondent wishes to know how to varnish drawings. If you will allow me, I will give that gentleman the benefit of my experience:—Dissolve 1 oz. of the best isinglass in two-thirds of a pint of water; when sufficiently cool, size the drawing with it four times; after which get the following, viz. Canada balsam 1 oz., oil of turpentine 2½ oz., properly mixed, and give the drawing four coats of this varnish. For applying the size and varnish, use a flat camel-hair brush, 2½ inches in width, and after each of the above coats, take care that the drawing remains in a horizontal position until dry; and it is important that the above operations be performed in a room free from dust.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant and subscriber,
THOMAS GLEGG.

Liverpool, September 16, 1843.

Our friend, "J. H. C.," has been pleased to forward the following useful extract from the *New Monthly Magazine* of Feb. 1843:—

"To fix pencil or chalk drawings, they should be washed in water in which a small quantity of isinglass has been dissolved. Any colourless glue will be available. Skimmed milk is used for the same purpose by some, but isinglass is preferable.

"To varnish the same drawings after having fixed and thoroughly dried them, pass over them a coat of sps. or colourless spirit varnish; and, when